# THE WORLD

NUMBER CLI.

By *ADAM FITZ-ADAM.*

*To be continued every* THURSDAY.

THURSDAY, *November* the 20th, 1755.

I WAS lately ſubpœnaed by a card, to a general aſſembly at lady Townly's, where I went ſo awkwardly early, that I found nobody but the five or ſix people who had dined there, and who for want of hands enough for play, were reduced to the cruel neceſſity of converſing, till ſomething better ſhould offer. Lady Townly obſerved with concern and impatience, that people of faſhion now came intolerably late, and in a glut at once, which laid the lady of the houſe under great difficulties, to make the parties properly. That, no doubt, ſaid Manly, is to be lamented; and the more ſo, as it ſeems to give your ladyſhip ſome concern: but in the mean time, for want of ſomething better to do, I ſhould be glad to know the true meaning of a term that you have juſt made uſe of, *people of faſhion:* I confeſs I have never yet had a preciſe and clear idea of it; and I am ſure I cannot apply more properly for information, than to this company, which is moſt unqueſtionably compoſed of *people of faſhion*, whatever *people of faſhion* may be. I therefore beg to know the meaning of that term: what are they, who are they, and what conſtitutes, I had almoſt ſaid anoints them, *people of faſhion?* Theſe queſtions, inſtead of receiving immediate anſwers, occaſioned a general ſilence of above a minute, which perhaps was the reſult of the whole company's having diſcovered for the firſt time, that they had long and often made uſe of a term, which

which they had never underſtood: for a little reflection frequently produces thoſe diſcoveries. Belinda firſt broke this ſilence, by ſaying, one knows well enough who are meant by *people of faſhion*, though one does not juſt know how to deſcribe them: they are thoſe that one generally lives with; they are people of a certain ſort—— They certainly are ſo, interrupted Manly; but the point is, of what ſort? If you mean, by people of a certain ſort, yourſelf, which is commonly the meaning of thoſe who make uſe of that expreſſion, you are indiſputably in the right, as you have all the qualifications that can, or at leaſt, ought to conſtitute and adorn a *woman of faſhion*. But pray, muſt all *women of faſhion* have all your accompliſhments? If ſo, the myriads of them which I had imagined from what I heard every day, and every where, will dwindle into a handful. Without having thoſe accompliſhments which you ſo partially allow me, anſwered Belinda, I ſtill pretend to be a *woman of faſhion*; a character, which I cannot think requires an uncommon ſhare of talents or merit. That is the very point, replied Manly, which I want to come at; and therefore give me leave to queſtion you a little more particularly. You have ſome advantages, which even your modeſty will not allow you to diſclaim, ſuch as your birth and fortune; do they conſtitute you a *woman of faſhion?* As Belinda was going to anſwer, Bellair pertly interpoſed, and ſaid, neither, to be ſure, Mr. Manly: if birth conſtituted *faſhion*, we muſt look for it in that ineſtimable treaſure of uſeful knowledge, the peerage of England; or if wealth, we ſhould find the very beſt at the Bank, and at Garraway's. Well then, Bellair, ſaid Manly, ſince you have taken upon you to be Belinda's ſponſor, let me aſk you two or three queſtions, which You can more properly anſwer than She could. Is it her beauty? By no means neither, replied Bellair; for at that rate, there might perhaps be a *woman of faſhion* with a gold chain about her neck in the city, or with a fat amber necklace in the country; prodigies, as yet unheard of and unſeen. Is it then her wit and good-breeding, continued Manly? Each contributes, anſwered Bellair, but both would not be ſufficient, without a certain *je ne ſçay quoy*, a ſomething or other that I feel better than I can explain. Here Dorimant, who had ſat all this time ſilent, but looked miſchievous, ſaid, I could ſay ſomething——Ay, and ſomething very impertinent, according to cuſtom, anſwered Belinda; ſo hold your tongue, I charge you. You are ſingularly charitable, Belinda, replied Dorimant, in being ſo ſure that I was going to be impertinent, only becauſe I was going to ſpeak. Why this ſuſpicion of me? Why? becauſe I know you to be an odious, abominable creature, upon all ſubjects of this kind. This amicable quarrel

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was put an end to by Harriet, who on a ſudden, and with her uſual vivacity, cried out, I am ſure I have it now, and can tell you exactly what *people of faſhion* are: they are juſt the reverſe of your *odd people*. Very poſſibly, madam, anſwered Manly, and therefore I could wiſh that you would give yourſelf the trouble of defining *odd people*; and ſo, by the rule of contraries, help us to a true notion of *people of faſhion*. Ay, that I can very eaſily do. In the firſt place, your *odd people* are thoſe that one never lets in, unleſs one is at home to the whole town. A little more particular, dear Harriet, interrupted Manly. So I will, ſaid Harriet; for I hate them all. There are ſeveral ſorts of them. Your prudes, for inſtance, who reſpect and value themſelves upon the unblemiſhed purity of their characters; who rail at the indecency of the times, cenſure the moſt innocent freedoms, and ſuſpect the lord knows what, if they do but obſerve a cloſe and familiar whiſper, between a man and a woman, in a remote corner of the room. There are too, a ſober, formal ſort of married women, inſipid creatures, who lead domeſtic lives, and who can be merry, as they think, at home, with their own and their huſband's relations, particularly at Chriſtmas. Like turtles, they are true and tender to their lawful mates, and breed like rabbets, to beggar and perpetuate their families. Theſe are very *odd women*, to be ſure; but deliver me from your ſevere and auguſt dowagers, who are the ſcourges of *people of faſhion*, by infeſting all public places, in order to make their ſpiteful remarks. One meets them every where, and they ſeem to have the ſecret of multiplying themſelves into ten different places at once. Their poor horſes, like thoſe of the ſun, go round the world every day, baiting only at eleven in the morning, and ſix in the evening, at their pariſh churches. They ſpeak as movingly of their *poor late lords*, as if they had ever cared for one another; and to do them honour, repeat ſome of the many ſilly things they uſed to ſay. Laſtly, there are your maiden ladies of riper years, orphans of diſtinction, who live together by two's and three's, who club their ſtocks for a neat little houſe, a light-bodied coach, and a footboy——and, added Bellair, quarrel every day about the dividend. True, ſaid Harriet, they are not the ſweeteſt tempered creatures in the world; but after all, one muſt forgive them ſome malignity, in conſideration of their diſappointments. Well, have I now deſcribed *odd people* to your ſatisfaction? Admirably, anſwered Manly; and ſo well, that one can, to a great degree at leaſt, judge of their antipodes, the *people of faſhion*. But ſtill there ſeems ſomething wanting; for the preſent account, by the rule of contraries, ſtands only thus; that *women of faſhion* muſt not care for their huſbands, muſt not go to church, and muſt not have unblemiſhed,

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or at leaſt unſuſpected reputations. Now though all theſe are very commendable qualifications, it muſt be owned they are but negative ones, and conſequently there muſt be ſome poſitive ones neceſſary to complete ſo amiable a character. I was going to add, interrupted Harriet, which by the way, was more than I engaged for, that *people of faſhion* were properly thoſe who ſet the faſhions, and who gave the tone of dreſs, language, manners, and pleaſures to the town. I admit it, ſaid Manly; but what I want ſtill to know is, who gave them that power, or did they uſurp it? for, by the nature of that power, it does not ſeem to me to admit of a ſucceſſion, by hereditary and divine right. Were I allowed to ſpeak, ſaid Dorimant, perhaps I could both ſhorten and clear up this caſe. But I dare not, unleſs Belinda, to whom I profeſs implicit obedience, gives me leave. E'en let him ſpeak, Belinda, ſaid Harriet; I know he will abuſe us, but we are uſed to him. Well, ſay your ſay then, ſaid Belinda. See what an impertinent ſneer he has already. Upon this Dorimant, addreſſing himſelf more particularly to Belinda, and ſmiling, ſaid,

——————*Then think*
*That he, who thus commanded dares to ſpeak,*
*Unleſs commanded, would have dy'd in ſilence.*

O, your ſervant ſir, ſaid Belinda; that fit of humility will I am ſure not laſt long; but however go on. I will, to anſwer Manly's queſtion ſaid Dorimant, which by the way has ſomething the air of a catechiſm. Who made theſe *people of faſhion?* I give this ſhort and plain anſwer; they made one another. The men, by their attentions and credit, make the *women of faſhion*; and the women, by either their ſuppoſed or real favours, make the *men* ſuch. They are mutually neceſſary to each other. Impertinent enough of all conſcience, ſaid Belinda. So without the aſſiſtance of you faſhionable men, what ſhould we poor women be? Why faith, replied Dorimant, but *odd women* I doubt, as we ſhould be but odd fellows without your friendly aid to faſhion us. In one word, a frequent and reciprocal colliſion of the two ſexes is abſolutely neceſſary to give each that high poliſh, which is properly called *faſhion*. Mr. Dorimant has, I own, ſaid Manly, opened new and important matter; and my ſcattered and confuſed notions ſeem now to take ſome form, and tend to a point. But as examples always beſt clear up abſtruſe matters, let us now propoſe ſome examples of both ſorts, and take the opinions of the company upon them. For inſtance, I will offer one to your conſideration. Is Berynthia a *woman of faſhion* or not? The whole company, readily and almoſt at once, anſwered, doubtleſs ſhe is. That may be, ſaid Manly, but why? For ſhe has neither birth nor fortune, and but

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ſmall remains of beauty. All that is true, I confeſs, ſaid Belinda; but ſhe is well dreſt, well bred, good humoured, and always ready to go with one any where. Might I preſume, ſaid Dorimant, to add a title, and perhaps the beſt to her claims of *faſhion*, I ſhould ſay that ſhe was of Belville's creation, who is the very fountain of honour of that ſort. He dignified her by his addreſſes; and thoſe who have the good fortune to ſhare his reputation—— have, ſaid Belinda, with ſome warmth, the misfortune to loſe their own. I told you, turning to Harriet, what would happen if we allowed him to ſpeak: and juſt ſo it has happened; for the gentleman has almoſt in plain terms aſſerted, that a woman cannot be a *woman of faſhion* till ſhe has loſt her reputation. Fye, Belinda, how you wrong me, replied Dorimant! Loſt her reputation! Such a thought never entered into my head; I only meant miſlaid it. With a very little care ſhe will find it again. There you are in the right, ſaid Bellair; for it is moſt certain that the reputation of a *woman of faſhion* ſhould not be too muddy. True, replied Dorimant, nor too limpid neither; it muſt not be mere rock water, cold and clear, it ſhould ſparkle a little. Well, ſaid Harriet, now that Berynthia is unanimouſly voted a *woman of faſhion*, what think you of Loveit? Is ſhe, or is ſhe not one? If ſhe is one, anſwered Dorimant, I am very much miſtaken if it is not of Mirabel's creation.—By *writt*, I believe, ſaid Bellair; for I ſaw him give her a letter one night at the opera. But ſhe has other good claims too, added Dorimant. Her fortune, though not large, is eaſy; and nobody fears certain applications from her. She has a ſmall houſe of her own, which ſhe has fitted up very prettily, and is often *at home*, not to crowds indeed, but to people of the beſt faſhion, from twenty, occaſionally down to two; and let me tell you, that nothing makes a woman of Loveit's ſort better received abroad, than being often *at home*. I own, ſaid Bellair, that I looked upon her rather as a genteel led-captain, a poſtſcript to *women of faſhion*. Perhaps too ſometimes the cover, anſwered Dorimant, and if ſo, an equal. You may joke as much as you pleaſe upon poor Loveit, but ſhe is the beſt humoured creature in the world; and I maintain her to be a *woman of faſhion*; for, in ſhort, we all roll with her, as the ſoldiers ſay. I want to know, ſaid Belinda, what you will determine upon a character very different from the two laſt, I mean lady Loveleſs: is ſhe a *woman of faſhion*? Dear Belinda, anſwered haſtily Harriet, how could ſhe poſſibly come into your head? Very naturally, ſaid Belinda; ſhe has birth, beauty and fortune; ſhe is genteel and well bred. I own it, ſaid Harriet; but ſtill ſhe is handſome without meaning, well ſhaped without air, genteel without graces,